



## GLOBAL PERFORMANCE SERVICES ENGAGEMENT & EXTERNAL RELATIONS



mb230323-i2

### NOTE TO THE MANAGEMENT BOARD

#### Amendment of EFSA budget 2023

##### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Article 34 of EFSA Financial Regulation foresees that EFSA submits for approval to its Management Board any amendment to the budget. This amending budget is subsequently published in the EU Official Journal.

##### SUBJECT OF THIS AMENDMENT

Contribution agreement to be concluded between EFSA and DG NEAR of the European Commission for the implementation of cooperation activities with the Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) countries as of **1 June 2023** in the amount of **€ 1.150,000**. The agreement will be paid in one instalment while the implementation period is 36 months.

##### DETAILED INFORMATION

EFSA is working with the IPA beneficiaries to promote the understanding of the Authority's work and strategic direction, share expertise and create information exchange mechanisms. These activities cover the full range of EFSA's remit and EFSA is committed to continue supporting the Commission in delivering these objectives with the aim of strengthening scientific cooperation and networking.

Through the Commission IPA contribution agreement, EFSA supports the IPA beneficiaries in food safety scientific expertise capacity building, transfer of risk assessment methodologies, harmonisation of national food safety data collections and risk communication practices. This will lead to enhanced capacity of the IPA beneficiaries to collect and analyse and report data/evidence, and ultimately, generate fit-for-purpose scientific advice. This will also boost IPA preparedness and resilience to face future food safety crises and issues of mutual concern.

This action has an overall aim to increase the knowledge on the EU food safety policy within the IPA society, as well as to build trust in the EU food safety decisions that are based on solid science, thorough risk assessment and accurate and timely communication on risks to the public, which are the core tasks of EFSA.

EFSA will further develop awareness and understanding of its role and outputs at the IPA beneficiaries' level and enhance the credibility of the scientific basis for European measures taken in the areas covered by EFSA's remit.

The activities will be focused in the areas where the Commission and EFSA have special interest in, such as improving crisis preparedness capacity, animal health preparedness, animal welfare, in which the National Food Authorities in the IPA beneficiaries concerned have already indicated that the most benefit can be obtained from a collaborative and transdisciplinary (One Health) approach. The focus will also be on building further IPA's risk communication and assessment capacity; implementation of innovative technology to foster

knowledge sharing within the digital ecosystem community; harmonisation with the EU/EFSA methodologies and standards; collaboration in data sharing and reporting initiatives and the visibility of EFSA in the IPA beneficiaries. All activities will take into account the value of networking among peers in the IPA beneficiaries and the EU.

**Major efforts are still necessary for food safety, animal welfare and the transition towards sustainable food systems which are increasingly important in view of the necessary alignment with the EU food safety acquis and the new strategic ambitions by the European Commission notably the EU Farm to Fork Strategy, the European One Health Action Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance, the Biodiversity Strategy and the Chemicals Strategy, to which EFSA is contributing as regulatory agency together with other EU sister Agencies.**

- **Relevance** – The new Action will be fully aligned to the objectives of the enlargement policy and EU policies (e.g.: EU food safety acquis, EU Green Deal, EU Farm to Fork Strategy, European One Health Action Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance and other strategic initiatives recently launched by the European Commission).
- **Effectiveness** – The new Action will continue building a regional network of peers working in the same policy area by participating in diverse initiatives, meetings, workshops and seminars. Personal and professional relationships not only allow sharing experiences to tackle challenges and resolve problems, but also help ensuring mutual support in case of need.
- **Efficiency** - The Action provides high value for money by promoting skills development for professionals by professionals, most often driven by a high level of commitment to progress in their field. Working together and exchanging knowledge between food safety experts operating in an ecosystem of actors, increasingly supported by digital platforms, ensures excellence and efficiency and maximises Europe's food safety risk assessment capacity and potential.
- **Impact** - The EU is one of the largest exporters of agricultural commodities to the IPA beneficiaries. Through the new Action, EFSA will further develop awareness and understanding of EFSA's role and outputs at the IPA level and with enhancing the credibility of the scientific basis for European measures taken in the areas covered by EFSA's remit. In the long-term, the action aims to enhance consumer protection from food-related risks and – indirectly – end beneficiaries include scientific academic and civil society organisations. Through the IPA Programme, EFSA is building the mechanisms for rapid exchanges of information and data with the IPA beneficiaries. Consequently, this is enhancing EFSA's ability to identify emerging risks and support risk assessors and managers in case of emergencies.

The European Green Deal has multiple objectives, including making Europe the first climate-neutral continent, and putting forward a "Farm to Fork Strategy" on sustainable food along the whole value chain. EFSA will work in close cooperation with other EU Agencies to mutualise on each other's competences and resources in shaping and delivering on these overarching goals also in the Western Balkans.

In the following period, EFSA will focus on implementing the Transparency Regulation<sup>1</sup> and informing the Commission-led initiative to develop a General Plan on Risk

<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/general\\_food\\_law/transparency-and-sustainability-eu-risk-assessment-food-chain\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/general_food_law/transparency-and-sustainability-eu-risk-assessment-food-chain_en)

Communications. Activities will include redefining processes to improve coordinated risk communications between EFSA, Member States, the Commission and other relevant stakeholders including the IPA beneficiaries; reviewing and refining products and channels for better-targeted communications; and piloting new digital tools to contextualise EFSA's scientific advice for interested parties and the general public. Reflecting provisions in the Transparency Regulation, EFSA's work on risk communication will increasingly be based on insights from research on risk perception as the Authority expands its social science function. This includes developing social listening tools and rolling out engaging communication campaigns in conjunction with its partners on food safety topics of high importance or relevance to citizens.

- **Sustainability** - In general, the implementation of IPA II Programmes provided high level of collaboration opportunities, not only between the IPA beneficiaries, but also between IPA and EU countries. This trend should also be followed during implementation of the next IPA III programme with introduction of more regional initiatives aiming to prepare the IPA beneficiaries for harmonization and interoperability of their own systems with the ones implemented in the European Union. This could also be achieved by stimulating undertaking bilateral activities for strengthening the capacities of the competent authorities and also by more active involvement of the IPA scientific community in EFSA's capacity building and strategic initiatives.

IPA national representatives are now well integrated in EFSA's networks for cooperation and data sharing, and the interest of the IPA food safety community to engage in EFSA's scientific work has increased considerably. However, for continuity, sustainability and long-term results, financial support from DG NEAR that will allow for IPA experts' participation in EFSA's networks is essential.

Considering the revised EU policy on cooperation with the Western Balkans, EFSA will focus its efforts on strengthening and streamlining scientific cooperation with EU sister agencies (ECDC, ECHA, EEA, EMA), Member States and the EC to avoid duplication of efforts and make full use of resources and synergies. EFSA will continue to support the IPA risk assessment community, to reduce scientific divergences and align risk assessment methodologies. Initiatives such as the 1<sup>st</sup> Autumn School, co-organised with the Croatian Food Safety Authority, will continue to be organised to support capacity building and knowledge transfer.

Participation in long-lasting projects and initiatives, such as the EU Risk Assessment Agenda, the EU wide data connection and reporting, SIGMA<sup>2</sup> and the EU menu project<sup>3</sup> will ensure future cooperation and participation of IPA food authorities in EFSA's activities and will enable IPA experts to improve and increase their capacities to perform risk assessment. IPA participation in harmonised EU-wide data reporting gives an overview on food safety risks and hazards, as well as on monitoring systems in the region and enhances EU and EFSA ability to address them. This will further stimulate cooperation among the IPA beneficiaries and Member States food safety organisation, through different risk assessment initiatives and collaborative platforms.

The pre-accession team in Engagement and External Relations unit (ENREL) is responsible for the implementation of the project. The team is composed of an engagement officer, seconded national expert and an assistant and supported by EFSA staff from the scientific units and the ENGAGE department. The seconded national expert (SNE), preferably from an IPA food safety

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/data-collection-animal-diseases>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/data/food-consumption-data>



institution, will be funded from the project. The SNE will work on the technical and administrative aspect of the project implementation and will liaise with the Commission services (DG SANTE, DG NEAR) and other EU agencies on the cooperation developments of interest to EU and IPA beneficiaries.

